S: Schwimmer E-4,5 (1966-1967) 1973
OJ23 Orokaiva OJ23
Mountain Orokaiva

Though Monckton reports (1921) a few large villages in the early post-contact period, it is only recently, in response to Australian pressure, that multi-clan villages, with populations ranging from 100 to 500, have become common. Most of the plantations found in the Northern district have been established by Australian ex-servicemen supported by government loans. A number of Orokaiva have been drawn to work on these plantations, others to jobs in Popondetta, others again to service with the police, the armed forces or employers outside the district. Such migration has substantially reduced the proportion of the male village population group.[2]

2. *Technology and Aesthetics*

We possess only the briefest description of Orokaiva industry (in Williams 1930). Although I did collect additional data, the traditional technology has been transformed to such an extent that my data must needs be fragmentary. The only axes and adzes now in use are made of steel; most of the various stone-made cutting tools described by Williams are no longer in use, being replaced by the ubiquitous bush knife wielded by young and old, male and female. One exception is worth noting, if only to emphasise an element of continuity: cockle shells are still used for the scraping of coconuts and for the shaping and decorating of pots. Most of the needles used by women are still made of flying fox bones (*poma*), even though a few needles have at times been obtained from the Mission. While files for sharpening tools are necessarily made of steel, rough leaves still serve as tools for scraping pots, smoothing down wood, etc. The same mixture in the use of basic tools is found in agriculture, hunting, and fishing: we still find the digging stick but also the axe; traditional hand nets and fishing spears (with steel tips), but also snorkels. For hunting, traditional devices have been almost entirely replaced by the shot gun. The old technology is still basically intact in those few industries which are directly related to ceremonial life: the making and decorating of loin cloths, feather headdresses, ceremonial weaponry, musical instruments such as drums. Certain other specifically feminine artifacts (mats, baskets, string bags) are still produced and in use, while much of the contemporary Orokaiva house-building technology is traditional, Fine wickerwork for ceremonial objects (armlets, spear decorations, etc.) is still made by some of the older men. Orokaiva women have almost stopped making pots, though this was an important industry in pre-contact times. While trade goods are used for everyday purposes, such pots as are still made serve as gifts to women at the time of marriage. They are kept for sentimental reasons, but we were able to see only very few.

An everyday Orokaiva meal consists of taro, often with a few vegetable condiments: coconut milk, cordyline tips, or edible pitpit,[3] or one of a number of herbs, sometimes of supposed medicinal value. Much care is devoted to the cooking of the taro and variety is provided partly by a choice from many varieties of taro growing in most gardens. In the dry season, any of a number of subsidiary foods (sweet potato, German taro, yam, banana, breadfruit and several others) may be added to make the taro stretch further. Meat or fish is eaten only rarely, usually on festive occasions. Foods like tea, sugar, bread and salt are also reserved for such occasions. Although several traditional methods of

8: Waddell & Krinks E-4,5 (1964-1965) 1968 QJ23 Orokaiva QJ23

462
291
286

Plate 7. Women spend many hours making string bags.

462
291
286
226

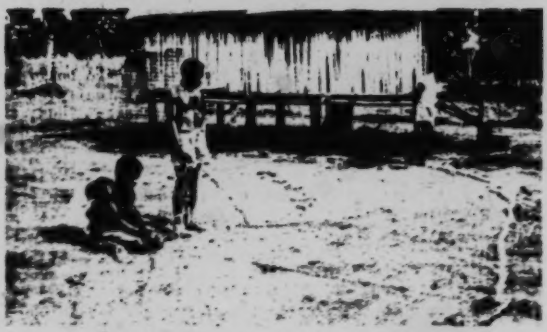

Plate 8. Men from Inonda and Moscu villages repairing a large fishing net preparatory to an all-night fishing expedition.

512
461
[462]
[286]
[285]
[824]
[462]

(ii) Other subsistence activities. The other subsistence activities are construction of houses and other buildings and the preparation of tools and equipment such as spears, sleeping-mats and string bags. The latter activity occupies, on average, about 1.5 man-hours per week with no seasonal variation. Over one-third of this time is accounted for by women making string bags. More than one-quarter is spent, mostly by women, collecting and weaving pandanus leaves into mats and over one-tenth in sewing clothes. Men's tasks in this sphere include the making and repair of axe-handles, spears and fishing nets and the weaving of coconut-leaf baskets. House construction is carried out almost entirely by men, except for the preparation of roof-sheets from sago-palm leaves, in which women may assist, and it occupies about 2.0 man-hours a week. During periods I and II, several people were building houses on the new village site. For the most part, such activity was not intensive; some continued to live in the old village and from time to time worked on their new houses, while others built temporary houses on the new site and lived in these while erecting their permanent houses. Not all construction, however, was subsistence oriented. In July and early August the men spent 189.6 hours erecting the copra-drier and in period III the entrepreneur spent 3.2 hours on his new trade store. (Also in period III, 33.1 hours were spent building the chapel, but this was recorded as 'church work' and is included under 'external agencies' rather than 'construction'.) The amount of time shown as spent on construction of houses, garden shelters and the copra-drier is much higher than the time that would be spent on building in most years. This is due to the unusual circumstances during 1964 of the decision to build the copra-drier and the reconstruction of the village; normally, individuals might build new houses only once in five years. Thus, the annual rate of house-construction would be only about one-fifth of the 1964 rate.

[342]

The amount of time expended by individuals in household tasks - cooking, washing and collecting firewood - as shown in Table 7:3 - is understated. Owing to problems of observation during periods I and II when the village was on two sites, cooking was rarely recorded. As a rule, wives prepare two meals a day; breakfast requires 0.8 hours and the evening meal takes 1.5 hours on average. When a midday meal is prepared, the mean time taken is 1.0 hours. Thus, wives are likely to spend at least 2.3 hours a day in cooking, or 16.1 hours a week, and it is clear that cooking is the most time-consuming task for them. When the figures are calculated incorporating this average figure, the mean time spent by individuals on household tasks appears as 10.1 hours rather than 3.8 hours. (This does not include the important contribution made by children, particularly young girls, who, from the age of about five, fetch water and wash pots and, by the time they are about twelve, assist in preparing meals.)

[157]